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ABSTRACT

To identify reasons why some students who register do not attend, the Trumbull Campus of Ohio's Kent State University conducted a telephone survey of 131 students who registered for fall 1993 but did not take classes. Students were asked to choose from the following general reasons for not attending: no financial aid, cost of tuition, other financial reason, change in career plans, incompatible work schedule, family responsibilities, illness, unidentified personal reasons, no reason given, and refused. Respondents were also invited to make more specific comments on their motivations. An analysis of surveys indicated that 44 percent of the respondents cited a financial reason for not attending, 23 a change in career plans, 12 incompatible work schedules, and 13 illness. Further, it became apparent from differences between forced choice categories and the open-ended responses that the defined categories did not adequately describe influences. Additional reasons students gave for not attending included transfer to another institution, cited by 10 respondents, and problems with financial aid forms and processes, cited by 25. Responses also indicated that multiple influences affected student decision-making. Suggestions from the information collected include aggressive financial aid education for faculty and staff to assist students more effectively and creating a financial aid tracking system that would generate reminders of important dates and requirements for mailing. Student comments are included. (TGI)

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Survey Results of Fall 1993 Students Who Registered But Did Not Attend

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JC 950 509

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SURVEY OF STUDENTS WHO REGISTERED FOR CLASSES FALL '93 WHO DID NOT ATTEND

Each semester a considerable number of students go through the registration process and secure class schedules but do not attend. In an attempt to identify reasons why students do not attend after registering, a telephone survey was conducted. In the Fall semester of 1993, a total of 159 students registered at Kent Trumbull but did not attend. This population was targeted for a survey aimed at identifying factors influencing students' decisions to not attend classes.

A total of 131 completed surveys were used to compile the following data.

Students were given eight general categories from which to choose the reasons for not attending. In addition to these general categories, students were asked to make more specific comments.

Student choices from the general categories were :

No financial aid	13
Cost of tuition	16
Other financial reasons	28
Change in career plans	23
Incompatible work schedule	16
Family responsibilities	6
Illness	13
Unidentified personal reasons	7
No reason given	8
Refused	1

Students were asked if they intended on attending in Spring '94:

Yes	61
No	53
No response	14
Not sure	3

The following pages contain representative specific comments from students. In

reviewing these specific reasons students gave for not attending classes in the Fall, several issues seem to be evident. First; student's open-ended comments vary considerably from the eight forced choice categories above. The difference between the forced choice categories and the open-ended responses seems to indicate that the defined categories do not adequately describe categories of influences on student decision making. The second issue that becomes apparent when reviewing student comments is that there are multiple influences on student decision making. Many students identified two or more factors affecting their decision making.

An analysis of student specific comments indicate additional factors and patterns influencing students decisions.

- students did not attend because they delayed in applying or did not apply for financial aid.

- a number of students did not receive financial aid information or were unsure of the financial aid process.

A large number of students (44%) indicated there were financial reasons for not attending. The students who cited financial reasons almost always indicated a variety of secondary factors influencing the decision not to attend. Though it is difficult to assess the amount of influence these reasons had in student's decision making, it might be assumed for the purposes of reviewing services and developing strategies, that the factors which students mentioned played at least an intermediate role in influencing their decision making.

Additional reasons students gave for not attending:

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION:

Youngstown State University	3
Kent East Liverpool	2
Kent Salem	1
Kent Campus	4

FINANCIAL AID PROCESSING:

Not sure of the process	8
Late in sending in forms	13
Waiting for paperwork	2
Denied Financial Aid	2

FAMILY REASONS:

Expecting babies	6
Illness of others	6
Personal illness	7
Child Care	4
Moved away	6
Getting married	4

WORK RELATED REASONS:

Work schedule changed	9
Changed jobs	3

CHANGED PLANS:

Started business	1
Decided on different training	6
Decided college was not for them	9
Became employed	7

As indicated in earlier studies, and discussed by a variety of researchers in the field of student retention and student decision making, students often report financial reasons for not attending or not returning. These reported financial reasons, however, have been found to be accurate. Students who identify financial reasons for not attending are often indicating that other priorities supersede pursuing their education. As mentioned above, it is difficult to determine the primary influences on student decision making without a more in-depth investigation.

INDICATIONS FROM THE DATA:

Several suggestions for changes or focuses can be made from the survey information collected. These suggestions are not an assessment of our existing efforts and are given to provide a basis from which to design specific strategies.

Aggressive Financial Aid Education Including:

1. Comprehensive education of faculty and staff on financial aid issues, trends and changes. The more staff having adequate current financial aid information, the more we can improve the quality of financial aid information dissemination.

2. Recruit the use of volunteer faculty and staff to assist students with Financial Aid Forms.

3. Create a financial aid tracking system that would generate reminders of important dates and requirements for mailing.

Additionally, faculty and staff need to become familiar with the range of community services available to assist students who have needs which the campus cannot address.

As with any information that becomes available from students, the question we need to ask ourselves is "what can I do with this information ?" The information should generate discussion among very competent professions on strategies for impacting this population of students.

This population of students, those who go through the registration process but never attend classes, represents one that is particularly disturbing. These are students who were at our door, ready to walk in, but were influenced away. These students represent individuals who had made the decision to pursue academic goals. We can develop and implement ways to assist and impact the decisions of this population.

A REPRESENTATION OF STUDENT COMMENTS:

Now attends college out of state

Attending police academy in Niles

Attends YSU for Nursing

In Occupational Therapy program courses at East Liverpool-Kent

Attends YSU

Radiology at Kent Salem

Applied at East Liverpool for Nursing

Attending travel agency classes

Attends Main campus in Kent

Wanted to see how job was working out with hours to be available for school

Interested in Real Estate for Spring semester

Needs to get up the money

New full-time job out of town

Pell grant papers got lost in mail

Getting ready for marriage, plans on attending Fall '94

Financial reasons

Had to appeal for grants and was denied

No one told me the dates to apply for financial aid

Grants didn't come in time for Fall '93

Having baby soon. Plans to attend Fall '94

Wait for Visa for Spring semester

Job complications

Wants to transfer from JVS to Kent Trumbull

Runs a small business and doesn't have time for school. Maybe next Fall.

Too busy - didn't know what the teacher would be like

Failed last semester

Missed deadline of financial application

Wants to come but work prevents it

Needs assistance for classes

Not interested. Personal reasons.

Has Bachelors degree

Personal surgery

Son went to Europe

Unable to afford tuition, but registered for Fall of '93.

Needed help with paperwork

Grant was shortened from $600 to $200 so was unable to attend

Waiting on B.V.R.

Need to get financial aid- didn't want to open loans

Didn't get any financial aid information in mail

Failed to complete papers for Fall '93.

Block on federal loan-need to ask financial aid office

Needs to work out financial aid at office, she's getting no support

Student loan was misplaced.

Confused with financial papers

Needed income tax information for grants.

Hoped to get PELL grant but wasn't accepted

Not sure of PIC program. Needed baby sitter

PIC would not pay for general classes

Waiting for loans to come through